

NY FORWARD 2025 UPTOWN: OUR SECOND DOWNTOWN!

REDC Region: **Mohawk Valley**
Program: **New York Forward Round 4**
Municipality: **City of Utica**
Project Name: **Uptown: Our
Second Downtown!**
County: **Oneida**
Contact: **Mayor Michael P. Galime**
315-792-0181
mayor@cityofutica.com

We're A Certified New York State Pro-Housing Community!





Above left to right:
King Cole Plaza circa 1965, Genesee at Arnold circa 1940

geographic area & justification



The Uptown District in South Utica has a reputation as being one of Utica's most charming neighborhoods. Historically this area was annexed from the town of New Hartford to accommodate residential development. The South Shore Railroad cut diagonally through the northern tip of the area and gave rise to the earliest iterations of Uptown's commercial core. As property next to the railroad was less desirable to build homes, it was developed by coal yards, lumber mills, and greenhouses.

The Uptown District's New York Forward boundary extends from Donovan Stadium at Murnane Field in the northeast, along Burrstone Road/Memorial Parkway to Butterfield Ave. in the east, along the Genesee Street commercial corridor to Amy Ave. in the south, and doubles back north along Sunset Ave.

City staff developed this footprint based on parameters set forth in the 2025 guidance that called for a walkable area with amenities that serve the local community, vehicle dependent, service-oriented businesses, small-town charm, low-density, opportunities for upper-story housing, and areas that have cultural and historic qualities. The Uptown District has these characteristics in spades.

The City of Utica certainly has a distinct downtown, but it cannot be emphasized enough how important distinct and diverse districts are to the City's quality of life and cultural cache. Utica is arguably built up of numerous districts, each of which functions independently; each of which is no less important to the whole. ***This year, the Uptown will get its due.***



geographic area & justification

The 2025 New York Forward boundary is a bookend to the City's 2019 DRI footprint and no less significant. The Uptown District is compact, dense, and highly trafficked, largely due to its walkability and proximity to residential neighborhoods. Although it is typical of municipalities submitting both DRI and NYF applications to focus on the same target area, we could not accomplish what we wanted to in a reduced DRI footprint for \$4.5 million; nor could we justify an expanded geographic target area in the proposed 2025 NYF target area for \$10 million. We made a strategic choice to apply for a boundary in each district that was appropriately-sized, thoughtful, and met the specific criteria laid out by the Governor for both DRI and NYF.



uptown district boundary

Uptown begins at Genesee Street and Memorial Parkway and extends to Hampden Place. In general the western boundary runs along Sunset Ave. while the eastern boundary extends along the back property lines of the properties bordering the former rail line from Sunset Ave. to Holland Ave. The district includes the Genesee St. commercial corridor, home to retail storefronts and restaurants, a significant cultural hub between The Other Side and the Uptown Theatre, and a large recreational anchor in Donovan Stadium at Murnane Field.

city-wide

2019 Round 4 DRI	\$10,000,000
E-Bliss Global Facility	\$4,100,000
70 Genesee St. Rehabilitation	\$10,000,000
Parking Garage Construction	\$52,000,000
Parking Lot Construction	\$1,500,000
Harbor Point Bulkhead Walls	\$1,500,000
Loop the Harbor Bridge Design	\$1,500,000
Bagg’s Square Brewing Rehab	\$1,100,000
The Doyle Rehabilitation	\$13,000,000
119-137 Hotel St. Rehabilitation	\$20,000,000
311 Main St. Rehabilitation	\$7,700,000
Nexus Center Construction	\$64,000,000
N. Genesee St. Gateway Bridge & Multi-modal Project	\$18,200,000
N. Genesee St. & Thruway Interchange Safety Project	\$2,300,000
Route 5S Safety Project	\$21,500,000
Wynn Hospital Construction	\$650,000,000

TOTAL \$878,400,000

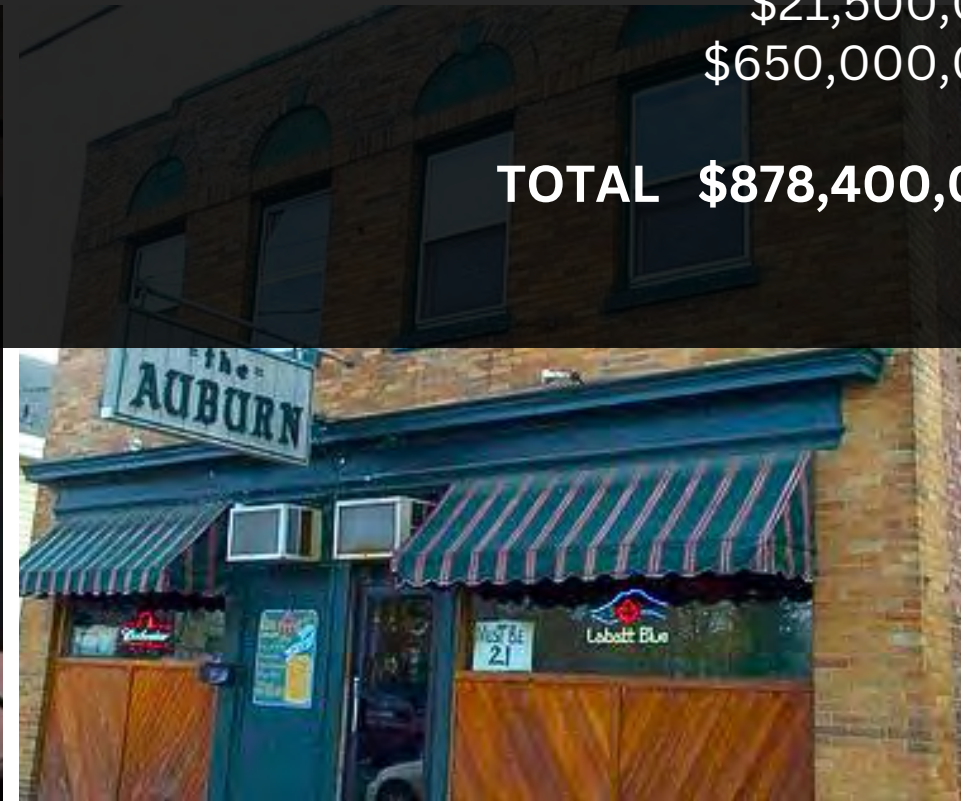
past investments
future potential

Significant public and private investment in South Utica and throughout the city create a strong foundation to maximize the impact of NYF funds.

within south utica

Murnane Field Upgrades	\$3.3 million
Genesee Street Paving	\$1.0 million
Uptown Theatre Building Stabilization	\$1.2 million
Sturges Manufacturing Expansion	\$1.9 million
Utica Children’s Museum Renovation	\$8 million
Upgrades at Roscoe Conkling Park	\$6 million
Improvements to the Utica Zoo	\$2 million
	\$23,400,000

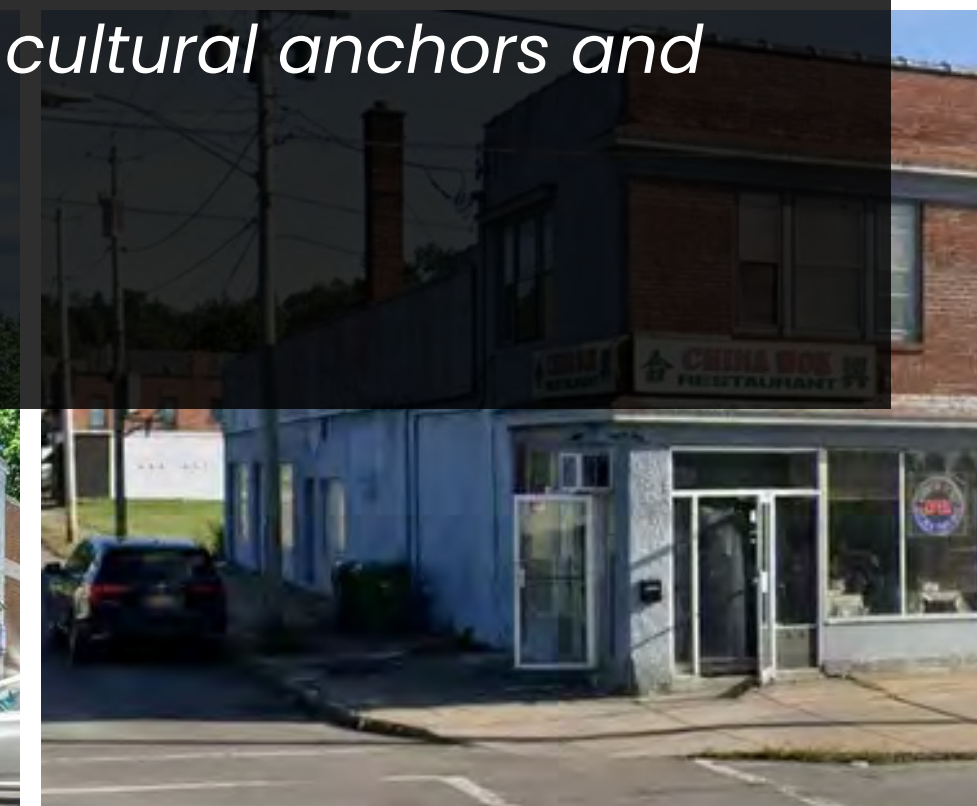
Bottom left to right:
Slice Pizzeria, The Auburn, Sturges Manufacturing, Market 32



vision statement

Our vision statement was created after the community generously shared with us their vision for the Uptown District. The City made a concerted effort to engage with neighborhood residents, families, citizens city-wide, business owners, landlords, and nonprofits. City staff scrutinized the responses against current planning efforts, including an impending Master Plan update, the City's Parks & Rec Master Plan, and Neighborhood Visioning Decks that were organized by Urban & Economic Development staff at the direction of the Mayor. **All reconnaissance pointed to one thing: the City is marshaling its time, energy, and resources in the right direction.**

Bottom left to right:
Emerson Ave. Coffee, Stathis Greek Restaurant, Walgreens, China Wok



The Uptown District will be a pedestrian-friendly, all-day neighborhood that has attractions for every age. Our neighborhood will be bustling with street-level restaurants, cafes, & mom-and-pop shops. Vacant, decrepit buildings will be refurbished & freshened; updated infrastructure will improve the district's charm & curb appeal.

We will support our existing cultural anchors and prioritize arts & recreation.

quality of life

South Uticans hold this neighborhood close to their hearts, especially because **those of us that grew up here still call this area home**. We cannot think of a better advertisement for a place than returning to it again and again. Many a childhood included taking in a Blue Sox game at Murnane Field; a two-dollar-Tuesday movie at the Uptown Theatre; or enjoying an Italian soda at Cafe Domenico. Although some of these businesses have moved on, new dimensions of the neighborhood have evolved in their stead.

Almost all of the respondents in our survey, when asked *“What are your favorite things about the Uptown neighborhood?”* called out the Uptown Theatre, Emerson Ave. Coffee, Slice, The Other Side, and the Green Onion. Aside from retail and cultural amenities, participants said that the neighborhood was safe, walkable, and diverse.

Each year the neighborhood organizes a host of events including the Boilerfaker, a 1.1 mile run from from the Beer Hub and ending at the Uptown Theatre. The Other Side has jazz every Friday evening; the Uptown offers regular improv classes and comedy writing, as well as its annual Improv Fest in October. Murnane Field is the home of the Utica Blue Sox, affiliated with the Perfect Game Collegiate Baseball League. A member of the 2017 Utica Blue Sox roster, Louis Varland, is pitched for the Toronto Blue Jays in the 2025 World Series.

“...It's such a warm & diverse community, & I love that I can walk to my coffee shop & then catch a show at the Uptown or get a drink at the Green Onion. I love how close we are to the heart of the city, but I can still walk up the street and be surrounded by nature at Forest Hill Cemetery. So many people have said in the past that there's nothing to do in Utica, but I think it's just New York's best speakeasy. You just need to know where to look, and there are so many amazing things happening all the time, & a lot of them are happening in the Uptown Neighborhood.”

at right:
tik-toker eating slice pizza, children at murnane field, emerson ave coffee, sunset over a residential street, uptown improv, green onion pub, jazz at the other side



recent & impending job growth

Destination Kia of Utica

15 jobs

Destination Kia, currently of Yorkvill but soon to be of Utica, is building new facility on a former brownfield site within the City's BOA. The project includes a 25,000 sf sales and service facility.

Utica University Nexus Center

21 jobs

The advent of the Utica University Nexus Center brought with it 21 full time jobs, and an additional 25-45 part time jobs, which are event-dependent.

River Lofts & Hotel

70 jobs

The River Loft project has committed \$20-25 million in funds for a hotel, apartment complex, and first-floor garden and eatery. It will create between 50-70 permanent, full-time jobs across the retail and hospitality components. It will also result in temporary, full-time construction jobs as the project progresses.

521 recent jobs

239 impending jobs

E-Bliss Global

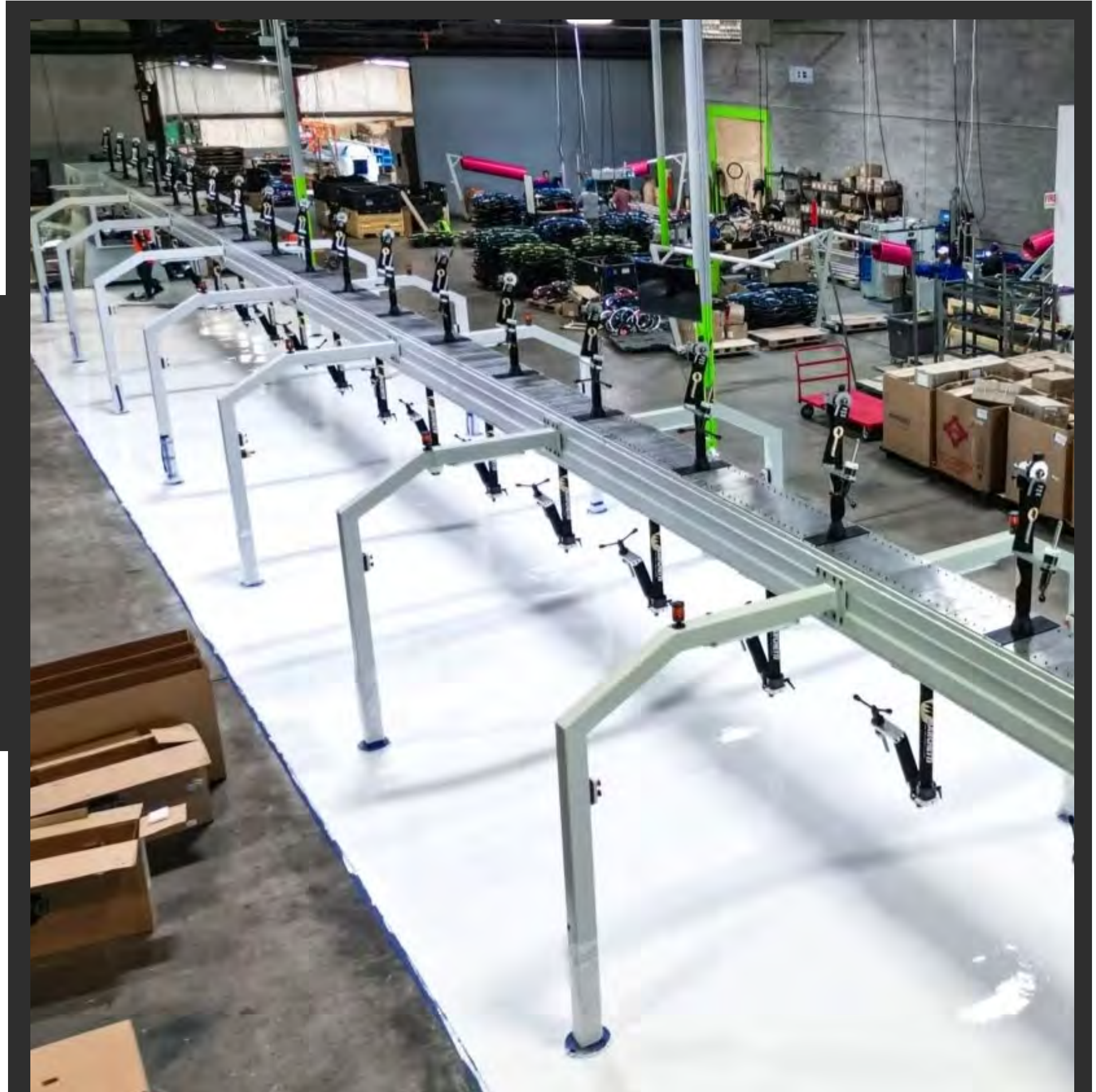
40 jobs

E-Bliss Global, an e-bike manufacturer based in Austin, TX has expanded its operations to Utica. This location will support the assembly and distribution of U.S.-made electric bicycles, with an initial goal of producing 15,000 units annually. More than \$4.1 million is being invested to establish a facility at 20 Harbor Point Road.

Wolfspeed

614 jobs

Wolfspeed recently completed the world's first 200mm silicon carbide manufacturing facility in Marcy, NY, just north of the City. The billion-dollar investment brings 614 jobs over the course of six years; Wolfspeed is already ahead of its hiring target.



supportive local policies

Facade Improvement Program (2026)

The City has proposed to fund a facade improvement program in its 2025-2026 CDBG budget; the proposed target area includes the 13502 area code of South Utica. The City is currently awaiting HUD approval.

Parks & Recreation Master Plan (2018)

The City's Parks & Recreation Master Plan serves as a North Star for any improvements made to the parks system. Although Donovan Stadium at Murnane Field is owned by Oneida County, the City has worked in lockstep with County Planning to facilitate improvements to one of the largest recreational destinations in South Utica.

Climate Smart Community (2016)

The City became a certified Climate Smart Community in 2016. This certification helps the City in its ambitions toward energy reduction, climate change adaptation and resilience, emission reduction, and decarbonization initiatives. Each project included in this application advances stated decarbonization goals.

UIDA UTEP (2025)

Utica Industrial Development Agency's (UIDA) Uniform Tax Exemption Policy (UTEP) scoring criteria was amended in 2025 to consider the following material factors: number and type of housing units, creation or retention of permanent, private sector jobs, and provision for on-site child care.

CODE Green: Utica Zoning Code Update (2021)

The City completed an overhaul of its zoning ordinance which was adopted by the Common Council in February 2021. The updated code incorporated sustainable design and smart growth principles while promoting mixed-use, pedestrian friendly, dense urban infill development to attract new residents and developers.

Certified Pro-Housing Community (2023)

The City of Utica is a NYS certified Pro-Housing community, a program established by Governor Hochul to help local governments address the State's housing crisis. The City has taken this directive to heart and aims to bring hundreds of new, mixed-income residential units to the market, as dictated by the City's recent housing study.

Complete Streets (2016)

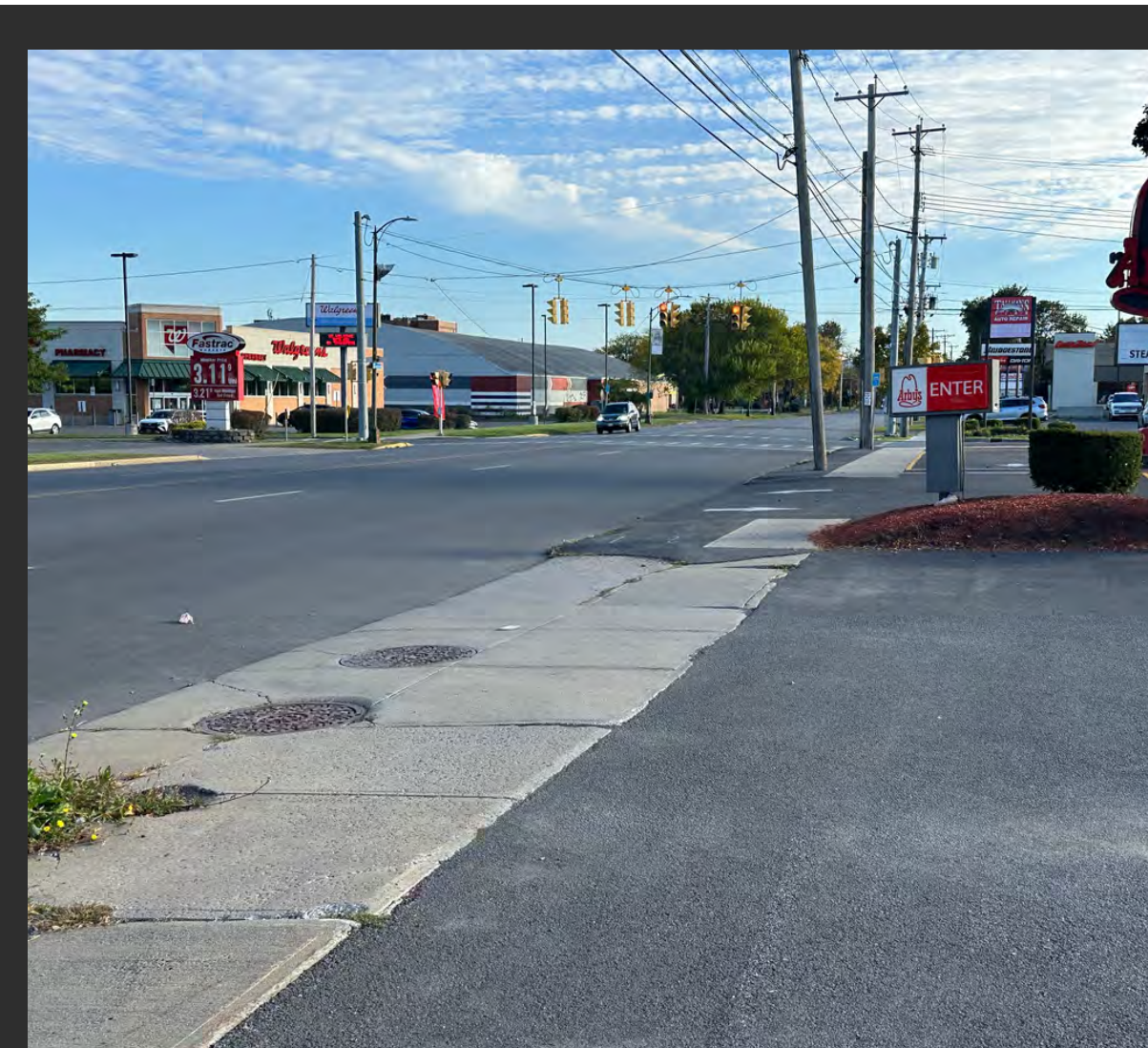
As part of the 2011 Master Plan, the Common Council adopted a Complete Streets policy. It ensures that new and updated public and private projects are planned, designed, maintained, and operated to enable safe, comfortable, and convenient travel for users of all abilities and modes of transportation.

Brownfield Opportunity Area (2023)

The City's BOA, titled Utica Central Industrial Corridor, was designated by the Secretary of State in 2023. The City currently has seven pending applications for BOA pre-development funding.

Neighborhood Vision Decks (2025)

At the Mayor's direction, the Urban & Economic Development (UED) staff created an inventory and assessment for many of the City's distinct neighborhoods. The vision deck for the Uptown District contained a thorough review of the area's past and existing conditions. One thing became clear: although this neighborhood is one of the City's most beloved, it is in dire need of investment.



public support

Targeted Landowner Outreach

City staff identified the five largest landowners within the NY Forward boundary and contacted each individually to understand the status of the property and discuss solutions, strategies, and maintenance. The landowners with whom City staff made contact were open and amenable to maintaining the charm and character of the neighborhood.

Digital and Print Survey

An online survey was released on social media and through a traditional press release, with the objective of gathering as much information as possible from the stakeholders in our target area. The survey was made available on flyers, table toppers, and coasters that were spread in businesses throughout the NY Forward footprint. The City received 49 responses, all of which informed our vision statement.

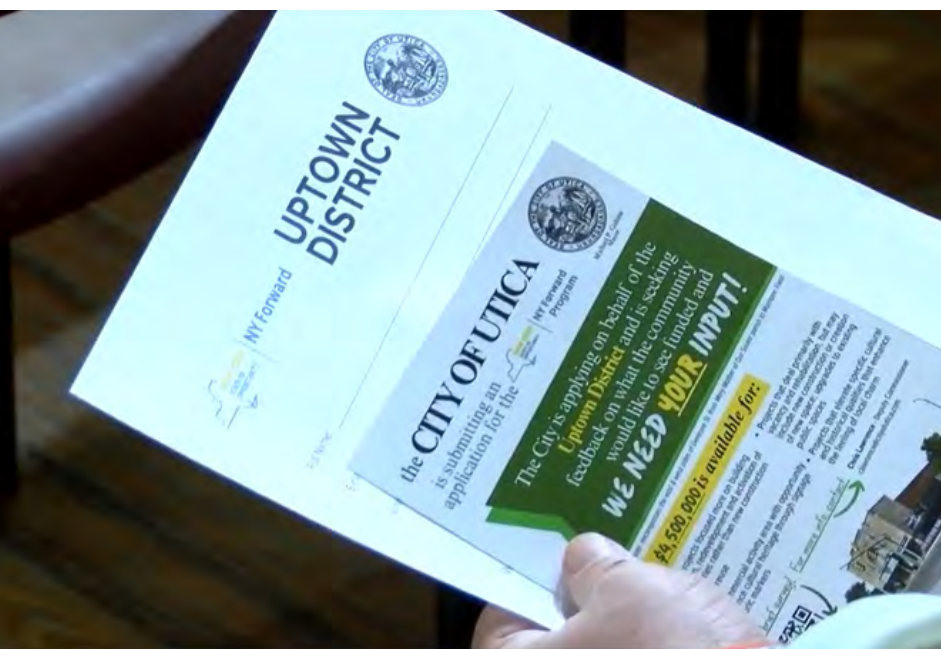
Community Meeting and Neighborhood Q&A

Mayor Galime and staff held a public meeting and community workshop on 10/27/25. The meeting included materials prepared by UED staff that demonstrated an understanding of the history and current context of the Uptown district and South Utica generally. The Mayor moderated a thoughtful and engaging discussion between the attendees, who called for funds allocated to residential rehabilitation and improvements to vacant properties.

Individualized Attention

UED staff prides itself on being readily available to meet community members where they are and walk them through ongoing City initiatives. This year, we were invited to present in someone's living room - a first for our New York Forward outreach! We were able to explain the ins and outs of the grant application to the board of The Other Side, and discuss which projects might best be suited to this application.

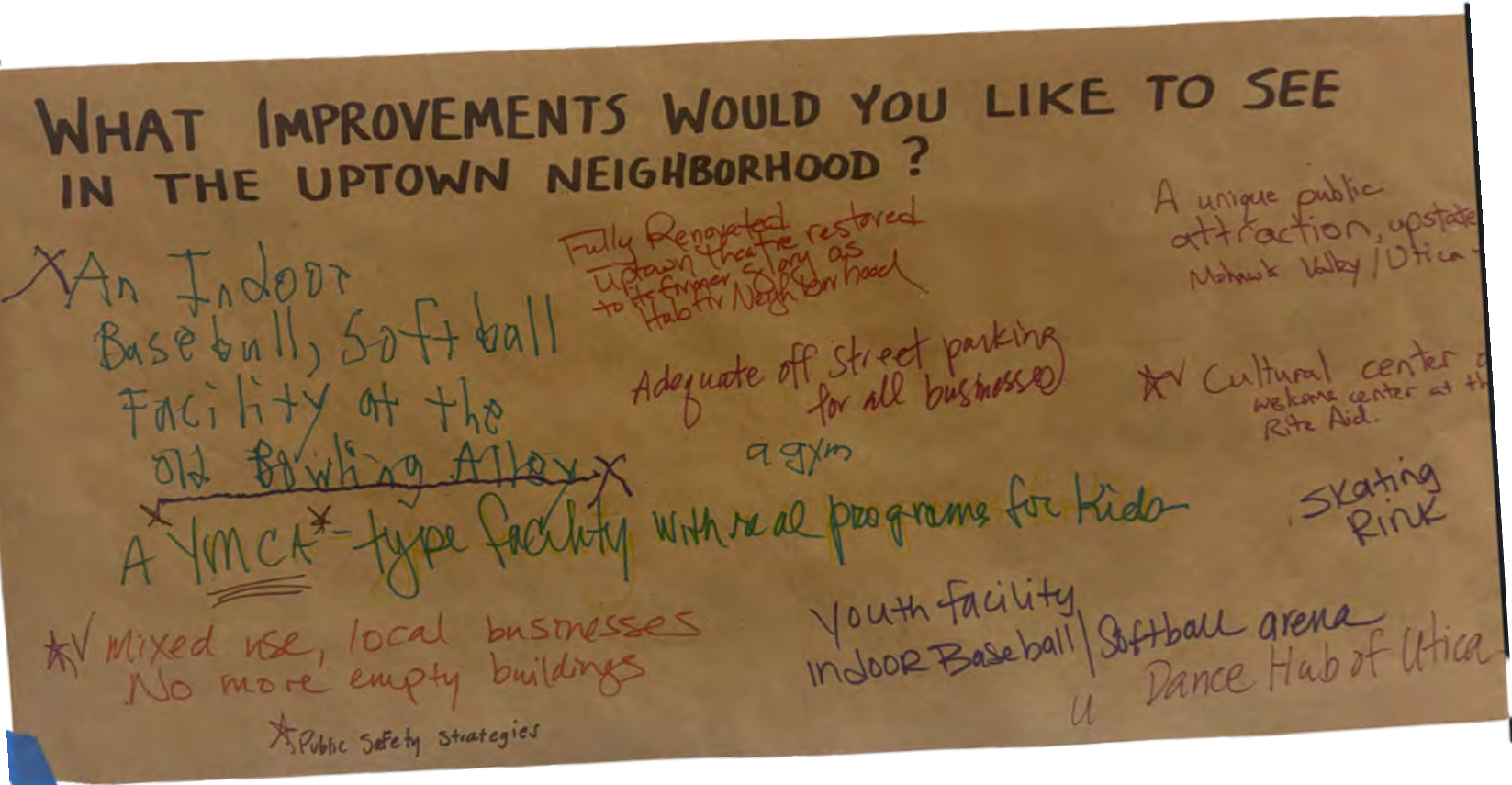
Bottom left to right:
WKTV coverage of public meeting, Deputy Commissioner Chris Lawrence discusses NYF funding opportunities with the board of The Other Side, article in the Daily Sentinel, Community Billboard advertising the Public Meeting



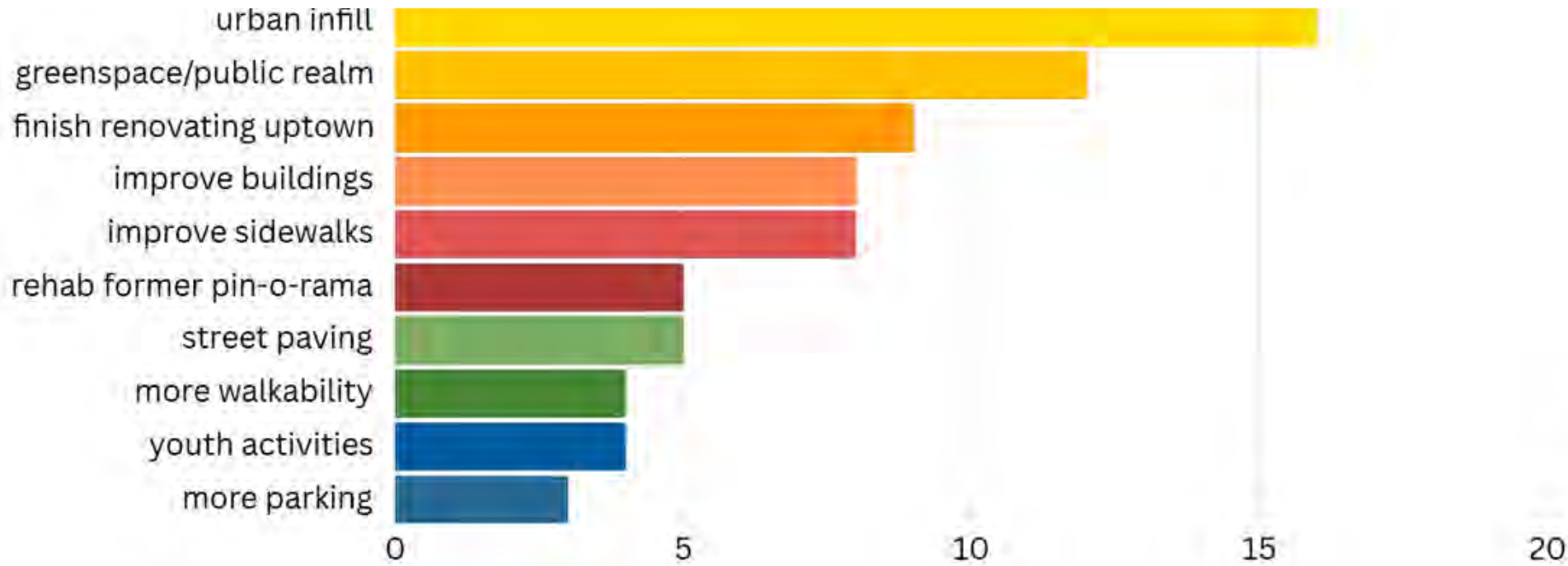
NY FORWARD PUBLIC INPUT MEETING



public support



top 10 survey responses "what improvements would you like to see in the uptown neighborhood?"



"what improvements would you like to see in the uptown neighborhood?"

- "I'd also love to see extensive sidewalk repairs, more/better street lights - any charm that could be added to where we're walking throughout this part of the city. Flower boxes, benches, etc. A better grocery store. We've also talked about how much we wish there was some kind of health club or even a YMCA with actual fitness facilities and a pool."
- "Invest in completion of uptown theatre renovations. More trees. A little park/ public use greenspace/playground. Investment in existing businesses to improve curb appeal. Bike lanes on genny. Affordable rental property"
- Face lift to the buildings and the sidewalks
- "Renovations and opening of the Uptown Theater, more walkable amenities along Genesee street, infill with more businesses/ restaurants/ late night options"
- "Business Support - Many of the commercial buildings in this area could use a glow up but likely don't have the funds to do so. Bring back the summer food truck events in the area that used to be at the Parkway - maybe by the baseball fields or behind the bowling alley? Generally the vacant lot across from the baseball field and the empty bowling alley look really sad could really use something over there, particularly some place for the youth to go. Streetscape Enhancements - many of the sidewalks in this neighborhood are very unwalkable due to cracks or leveling issues and very often overgrown. This leads to people having to walk in the street (and makes handicap use of the sidewalks very difficult)."
- "Completely redoing sidewalks from Mavis on Genesee St south both sides. If street lights along major roads (Genesee, sunset) can be redone with nice lamps similar to the look on the parkway by the rec center."
- "Commercial retail space / development"

transformative project opportunities & readiness

#	Transformative Project	DRI Request	Project Cost	Implementation Team
1	recreation hub at murnane field	\$800,000	\$3,642,000	Oneida County, City of Utica
2	the arboretum at sunset ave. (phase 1)	\$1,100,000	\$3,210,690	1700 Genesee Street Corp., City of Utica
3	uptown theatre for creative arts (utca)	\$1,425,850	\$1,425,850	UTCA
4	king cole plaza upgrades	\$1,527,500	\$2,350,000	Little Safford Corp.
5	municipal streetscape improvements	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	City of Utica
6	multi-family residential rehabilitation	\$500,000	\$500,000	City of Utica
7	public art along the boilermaker route	\$120,000	\$120,000	City of Utica, Boilermaker Road Race Committee
8	uptown plaza property improvements	\$89,125	\$133,440	John Keeler
9	small projects fund	\$300,000	\$300,000	City of Utica
10	commercial kitchen & bathroom ADA upgrades	\$75,000	\$104,000	Tony Myers
total:		\$7,937,475	\$11,785,980	

Bottom left to right:
Genesee St at Irving Pl, View of the Uptown Plaza & Emerson Ave Coffee from deck of the Balkan/Hadley, Two-Family residences on Shepherd Place with empty lot at 1700 Gensee St in foreground, Utica Firefighters from house#4 on Shepherd Place



transformative project: the arboretum at sunset ave. (phase 1)

Project Sponsor: 1700 Genesee St. Corp., City of Utica

Timing: 2027 - 2029

Location: 1724 Genesee St.

Match and Leverage: 1700 Genesee St. Corp. private equity (*secured*), City of Utica funding, cash + in-kind (*secured*), EPA Assessment Grant funding (*anticipated*), NY Forward funds (*anticipated*).

Building Decarbonization: Phase 1 of this project will not involve new construction, but rather demolition of a defunct, contaminated building. The western acreage of the site will be programmed as a “sponge park” designed to function as a flood resiliency feature, and will include native tree and shrub species, permeable pavers, engineered wetlands and water retention areas.

Site control: 1700 Genesee St. Corp. is the project sponsor and retains site control. The City of Utica is co-sponsor and has site control authorization from 1700 Genesee St. Corp.

Project Description: 1700 Genesee St. Corp. and the City of Utica will undertake demolition and site prep of 1724 Genesee St., the site of the former AMF Pin-o-Rama. It will include adding a small sponge park and recreational trail across from the Shepherd Place neighborhood to mitigate flooding and improve curb appeal. This project will involve demolition and site prep in furtherance of a complementary-use hotel development and public realm amenities to support four-season recreational uses at Murnane Field. The site will be divided into agile, development plots intermixed throughout the arboretum for planned development. A meandering trail connecting the Genesee Street commercial corridor will traverse the property, creating a green corridor full of shade trees, respite areas, public art, benches, trash cans, and water fountains/bottle filling stations. A “sponge park” will be added on the western acreage to provide flood mitigation and climate resiliency and beautify the Boilermaker Road Race route.

NYF Request: \$1,100,000 (34% of project cost to fund public realm improvements and climate resiliency measures)

Total Project Cost: \$3,210,690



transformative project: recreation hub at murnane field

Project Sponsor: Oneida County

Timing: 2027 - 2028

Location: 898 Rose Pl.

Match and Leverage: Oneida County (*secured*), NY BRICKS/DASNY (*anticipated*), NYS CFA (*anticipated*), NY Forward funds (*anticipated*). Oneida County previously funded \$3,339,680 in improvements including field drainage and turf upgrades in 2025.

Building Decarbonization: Energy efficient lighting and doors, low-flow water fixtures.

Site Control: Secured.

Project Description: Oneida County will make additional improvements to Murnane Field, focusing on making it a four-season tourism destination and focusing on the spectator experience. The project includes new seating, a new scoreboard, ADA compliant bathrooms, safety netting, and new concessions. Oneida County Planning commissioned a report titled “Evaluation of Baseball Facility Development Options” from December 2022. Phase One was constructed in 2025 and focused on the playing surface and its abutting geography to support the playing field’s sports functions. Phase Two entails replacing the scoreboard, updating the press box, adding safety netting, upgrading the stadium and premium seating, a new concession building, and ADA compliant restrooms.

NYF Request: \$800,000 (*21% of project cost to fund the new concession building and ADA-compliant restrooms*)

Total Project Cost: \$3,642,000



transformative project: uptown theatre for creative arts (utca)

Project Sponsor: UTCA (Nonprofit)

Timing: 2027

Location: 2014 Genesee St.

Match and Leverage: Bank financing (*secured*), NYMS HCR funding (*secured*), National Grid funding (*secured*), NYSCA funding (*secured*), NYS CFA funding (*secured*), NY Forward funds (*anticipated*).

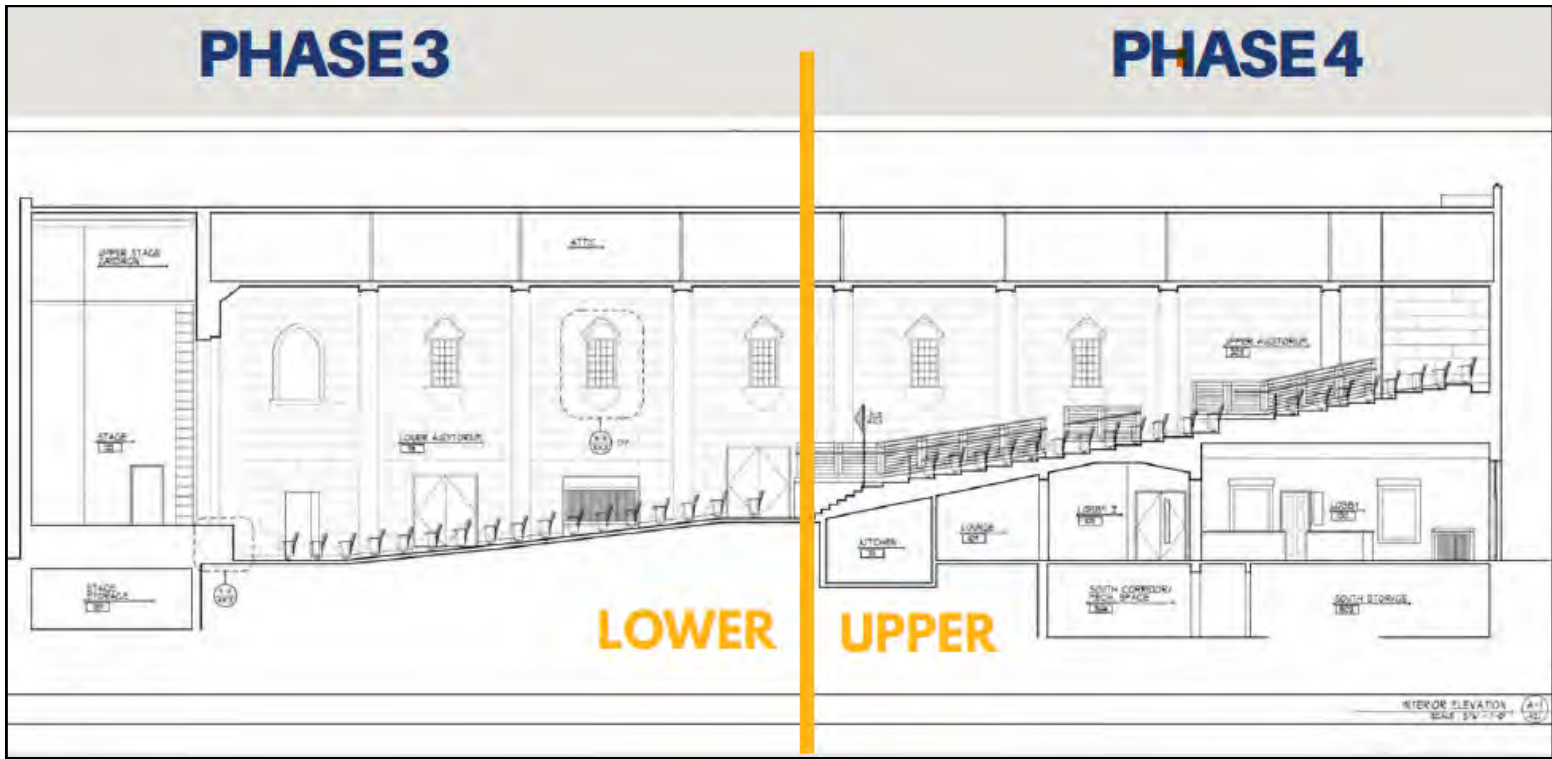
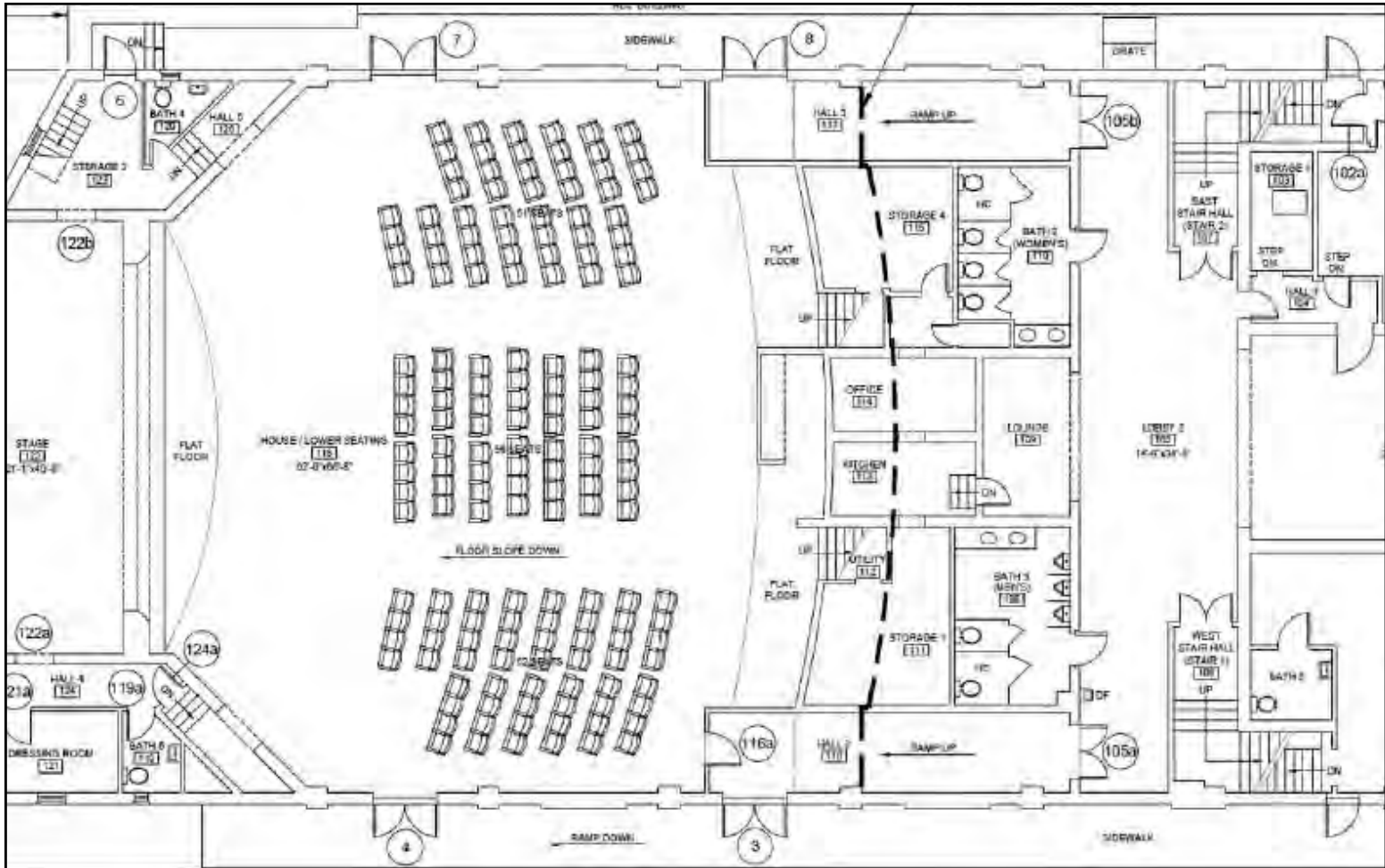
Building Decarbonization: The project will include electrical system updates and energy efficient lighting, sustainable flooring, and HVAC updates.

Site Control: Secured.

Project Description: Funds will be used to complete the renovation of the Uptown Theatre, including historic restoration, adding a state-of-the-art A/V system, cinema projector and screen, and audience seating. UTCA has currently completed three phases of planned renovations and restoration. The next two phases, 3B and 4, include new stage curtains, flooring, electrical system updates, replacing audience seating and increasing capacity from 250 to 900, restoring plaster walls, the ceiling, and window niches, removing drywall to restore the original layout, repairing the projection room, replacing the cinema projector and screen, and installing an A/V system. This will allow UTCA to re-open the main auditorium for the first time since 2014. With this new space available, the Uptown can invite audiences for a robust schedule of concerts, movies, local cultural showcases, and other performances. A fully operational auditorium will transform the Uptown from a promising start-up to a thriving destination for the arts.

NYF Request: \$1,425,850 (100% of total project cost)

Total Project Cost: \$1,425,850



transformative project: king cole plaza upgrades

Project Sponsor: Little Safford Corp.

Timing: 2027 - 2028

Location: 1904 Genesee St. & 1926 Genesee St.

Match and Leverage: Private equity (*secured*), NY Forward funds (*anticipated*).

Building Decarbonization: The project will use energy efficient lighting to pursue resiliency.

Site Control: Secured.

Project Description: The goal of this project is to create a more cohesive plaza complex that can serve as a hub for the Uptown District. Proposed project elements include new facades and awnings to promote uniformity between King Cole and South Towne plazas, attractive, low-profile signage, new sidewalks, landscaping, bike racks, and benches, repaving and restriping the parking lot, and exterior lighting and security cameras.

A letter from the owner states: “We have always been community minded and would like, to the best of our ability, to create a space that is responsive to what the neighborhood desires and consistent with the City’s vision for the area.”

NYF Request: \$1,527,500 (65% of project cost)

Total Project Cost: \$2,350,000



transformative projects: addressing the public realm

Municipal Streetscape Improvements

Project Sponsor: City of Utica

Location: NYF target area

Timing: 2027 - 2029

Match/Leverage: City funds (*secured*), in-kind staff time (*secured*), NYF funds (*anticipated*).

Project Description: The City of Utica will embark on an ambitious public realm rehabilitation of Genesee St. from Memorial Parkway to Kenyon Ct., adding street trees, right-of-way greenspace, eliminating unnecessary ingress/egress, creating a bike- and pedestrian-friendly atmosphere, installing trash cans, lighting, benches, and restriping crosswalks.

Building Decarbonization: The proposed project will tackle resiliency by adding street trees to support native species, offset carbon, and recharge the groundwater, and further reduce carbon emissions by promoting multimodal transportation.

Site Control: Secured.

NYF Request: \$2,000,000 (100% of project cost)

Total Project Cost: \$2,000,000

Residential Rehab

Project Sponsor: City of Utica

Location: NYF target area

Timing: 2027 - 2029

Match/Leverage: A match of 25% of the NYF grant per property will be required from all participating property owners.

Project Description: This program will fund exterior improvements for multifamily residential buildings throughout the NYF boundary, specifically targeting the homes along the Boilermaker Race route. It is anticipated that the maximum grant award to any single property will be \$25,000.

Site Control: Each applicant will be asked to demonstrate site control at the time of the application.

NYF Request: \$500,000 (100% of project cost)

Total Project Cost: \$500,000

Public Art along the Boilermaker Route

Project Sponsor: City of Utica, Boilermaker Road Race committee

Location: Portions of Memorial Parkway, Genesee St., Shepherd Pl., and Sunset Ave.

Timing: 2027

Match/Leverage: City funds (*secured*), in-kind staff time (*secured*), NYF funds (*anticipated*).

Project Description: Sculptures of runners, suitable to be left outdoors, will be placed along the South Utica portion of the Boilermaker Road Race route, which traverses the Parkway, Genesee St., Shepherd Place, and Sunset Ave. The sculptures are by local artist and Utica University professor Steven Specht, whose first piece, “Runner with a Heart” was unveiled at UU to recognize the prominent place that distance running occupies in the local community.

Site Control: Secured. Sculptures will only be placed in City of Utica right-of-way.

NYF Request: \$120,000 (100% of project cost)

Total Project Cost: \$120,000



transformative projects: strengthening small business

Uptown Plaza Property Improvements

Project Sponsor: John Keeler

Location: 2007 Genesee St.

Timing: 2027 - 2029

Match/Leverage: Private funds (*secured*), NYF funds (*anticipated*).

Project Description: The project sponsor will undertake exterior facade improvements, parking improvements, and window replacements to the Uptown Plaza, which is home to many small businesses including Slice Pizza and the Dancenter. Three of the windows to be replaced are arched, requiring custom work to maintain the iconic look.

Building Decarbonization: The project will utilize energy efficient windows for the window replacement.

Site Control: Secured.

NYF Request: \$89,125
(66% of project cost)

Total Project Cost: \$133,440

Small Projects Fund

Project Sponsor: City of Utica

Location: NYF target area

Timing: 2027 - 2029

Match/Leverage: Applicants will be asked to provide a percentage of the total project costs, with a maximum 75/25 split between NY Forward funds and private equity.

Project Description: The City will establish a small projects fund to help businesses and nonprofits assist with placemaking, facade upgrades, capital improvements, equipment purchases, and commercial and retail fit-out. There are a number of eligible projects that have been identified by the City including a *large-scale mural* in the target area, and *commercial improvements* to 2001 Genesee St. and 2006 Genesee St., respectively.

Building Decarbonization: Any eligible applicant will be obligated to consider building decarbonization, energy efficiency, and climate resiliency measures.

Site Control: Each applicant will be asked to demonstrate site control at the time of the application.

NYF Request: \$300,000
(100% of project cost)

Total Project Cost: \$300,000

2011 Genesee St. Commercial Kitchen and ADA Upgrades

Project Sponsor: Tony Meyers

Location: 2011 Genesee St.

Timing: 2027

Match/Leverage: Private equity (*secured*), NYF funds (*anticipated*).

Project Description: The project will make interior improvements to 2011 Genesee St., home to The Other Side and Emerson Ave. Coffee. A commercial kitchen will be added to the rear of the building to support an expanded menu at Emerson Ave. Coffee. An ADA compliant bathroom renovation will take place to accommodate people of every ability who frequent both businesses.

Building Decarbonization: The project will utilize low-flow bathroom fixtures and energy efficient lighting.

Site Control: Secured.

NYF Request: \$75,000
(72% of project cost)

Total Project Cost: \$104,000



administrative capacity

The City of Utica's Urban and Economic Development staff will be responsible for administering and implementing the DRI grant, with support from Engineering, Parks & Recreation, Office of the Comptroller, Corp. Counsel, and Department of Public Works.

Led by **Mayor Michael P. Galime**, the core team is as follows:

- **Brian Thomas**, Commissioner, UED
- **Chris Lawrence**, Deputy Commissioner, UED
- **Laura Cohen**, Director of Community Development, UED
- **Audrey Alix**, Planner, UED
- **Alissa McElhenny**, Financial Analyst, UED
- **Nick Bridenbecker**, Deputy City Engineer, Engineering
- **Dave Short**, Commissioner, Parks & Recreation
- **Mark Sokolowski**, Commissioner, DPW

The core team is highly motivated to implement the long-term vision set forth in this application. UED staff has met regularly with businesses, property owners, and nonprofits within the West Utica commercial corridor and the Brewery District. It's time to transition the energy of this area from potential to kinetic; the City's 2025 proposed DRI will launch this neighborhood into the stratosphere.

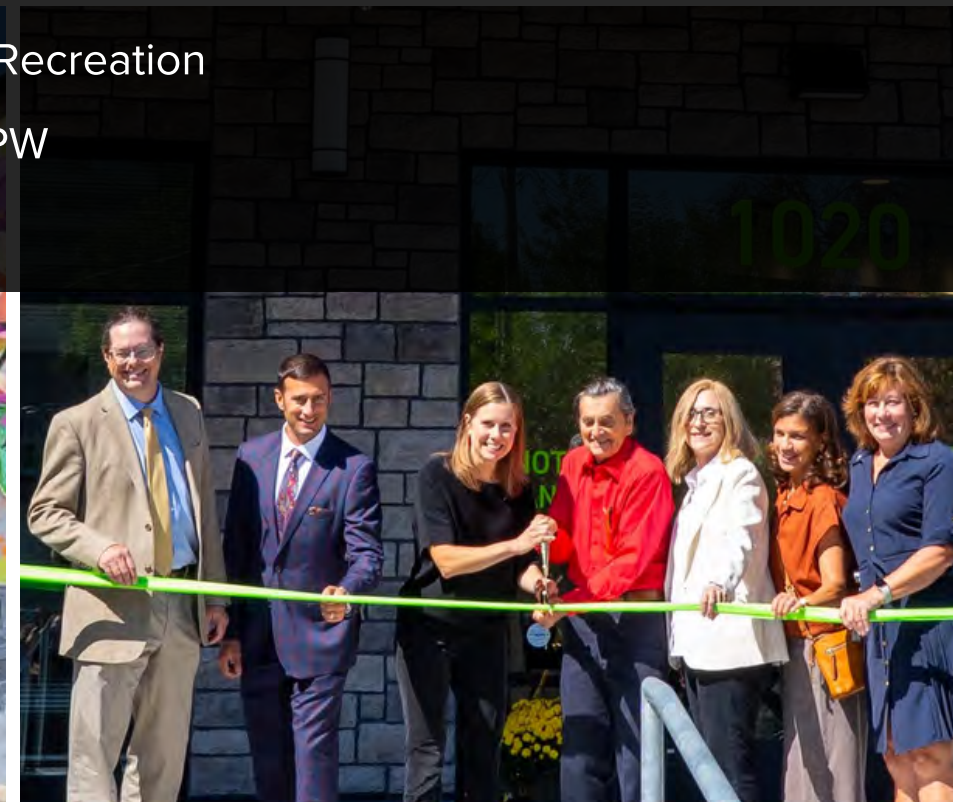
The City of Utica and UED has all the administrative procedures in place for a timely implementation of a DRI award. After all, the City successfully completed its 2019 DRI during a global pandemic - on time and with enthusiasm. Since the successful implementation of the 2019 DRI, UED has added 3 new, highly capable staff members - increasing the department's capacity even more.

UED staff administers a combined budget of over \$4,000,000 in federal funds annually, all of which are entitlement funds provided through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Beyond federal funds, UED has administered \$62,000,000 of ARPA funding over the last several years.

UED staff has a deep understanding of the DRI program, and decades of experience carrying out planning projects. Staff can fully support the planning consultant assigned by the State and the Local Planning Committee once it is formed.

Bottom left to right:

Lafayette Square Park, Ribbon cuttings at Artspace Utica, Munson Park and DeSales Center.



October 15th, 2025

AUTHORIZING SUBMISSION OF 2025 NEW YORK FORWARD (NYF) APPLICATION

day of October, 2025

Melissa R. Sciortino
Melissa R. Sciortino, City Clerk



ONEIDA COUNTY
OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

ANTHONY J. PICENTE, JR.
County Executive
ce@oneidacountyny.gov

October 27, 2025

Mr. Lawrence T. Gilroy III
Dr. Marion Terenzio, President, SUNY Cobleskill
c/o Empire State Development
New York State Office Building
207 Genesee St.
Utica, NY 13501

Re: Letter of Support for NY Forward Funding

Dear Mr. Gilroy and Dr. Terenzio,

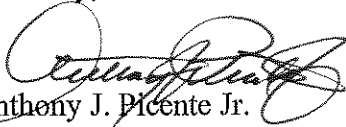
I am writing in support of the City of Utica's application to the New York Forward (NYF) grant program. The Uptown District has all the community characteristics of a traditional, small-scale downtown: it is walkable, has amenities that serve the immediate neighborhoods, has service-oriented businesses, low-density and is unabashedly charming.

The Uptown District serves the South Utica neighborhood which was largely developed in the 1920s. It is comprised of single-family homes and duplexes. It is a walkable, family-friendly neighborhood that includes retail, recreational, manufacturing and cultural amenities. Oneida County has made its own multi-million dollar investment to the district through its upgrades to our facility at Murnane Field.

The projects proposed in the City's application will add some much-needed vibrancy and revitalization to a district that, historically, has been overlooked in favor of other areas of the City. This district also falls outside of the CDBG target area, which is the most reliable funding stream available to the City. The businesses, property owners, and residents in Uptown are no less deserving of a bright, beautiful and safe neighborhood. This grant application aims to provide just that.

The Uptown District is a perfect fit for the NYF grant program and will shore up what is, effectively, the City's second downtown. We thoroughly support this application and the City's efforts to revitalize Uptown.

Sincerely,


Anthony J. Picente Jr.
County Executive



MARIANNE BUTTENSCHON
Assemblywoman 119th District

THE ASSEMBLY
STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY

COMMITTEES
Agriculture
Banks
Economic Development, Job Creation,
Commerce and Industry
Education
Higher Education
Veterans' Affairs

October 20, 2025

Mr. Lawrence T. Gilroy III
Dr. Marion Terenzio, President, SUNY Cobleskill
c/o Empire State Development
New York State Office Building
207 Genesee St.
Utica, NY 13501

Re: Letter of Support for NY Forward Funding

Dear Mr. Gilroy and Dr. Terenzio,

I am writing in support of the City of Utica's application to the New York Forward (NYF) grant program. The Uptown District has all the community characteristics of a traditional, small-scale downtown: it is walkable, has amenities that serve the immediate neighborhoods, has service-oriented businesses, low-density, and is unabashedly charming.

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The projects proposed in the City's application will add some much-needed vibrancy and revitalization to a district that, historically, has been overlooked in favor of other areas of the City. This district also falls outside of the CDBG target area, which is the most reliable funding stream available to the City. The businesses, property owners, and residents in Uptown are no less deserving of a bright, beautiful, and safe neighborhood. This grant application aims to provide just that.

The Uptown District is a perfect fit for the NYF grant program and will shore up what is, effectively, the City's second downtown. We thoroughly support this application and the City's efforts to revitalize Uptown.

Respectfully,

Marianne Buttenschon
Assembly member of the 119th District



CITY OF UTICA

Department of Legislation
1 Kennedy Plaza, Utica, NY 13502
Joseph M. Betar, Councilmember 3rd District

November 7, 2025

Mr. Lawrence T. Gilroy III
Dr. Marion Terenzio, President, SUNY Cobleskill
c/o Empire State Development
New York State Office Building
207 Genesee Street
Utica, NY 13501

Re: *City of Utica – New York Forward Grant Application (Uptown District)*

Dear Mr. Gilroy and Dr. Terenzio:

I am writing in support of the City of Utica's New York Forward ("NYF") grant application for the Uptown District. As the Common Council representative for the residents of South Utica, where the Uptown is located, and as a Utica resident, I am pleased to offer my support for the City of Utica's application to the NYF grant program.

The Uptown District reflects the core character of a traditional, small-scale downtown – walkable streets, local businesses serving nearby families, and distinctive architecture dating to the early 20th century. This foundation helped establish the mixed-use character that defines Uptown today – a family-oriented neighborhood that continues to blend homes, shops, recreation, and cultural amenities within walkable blocks.

Over the past several years, however, the Uptown District has received less attention than other areas of the City. The projects proposed in the City's application seek to address that imbalance, and will add much-needed vibrancy and revitalization to the district, helping to recapture its historic charm. The dedicated businesses, property owners, and residents in Uptown deserve a bright, beautiful, and safe neighborhood.

These projects present a rare opportunity to direct funding toward an area that has long been underserved by traditional grant programs. The initiative will help revitalize what is effectively Utica's second downtown, by strengthening small businesses and improving the quality of life for residents citywide.

As such, I respectfully request full consideration of the City of Utica's NYF funding application for the Uptown District. Thank you for your attention to this correspondence.

Sincerely,

Joseph M. Betar, Esq.
Utica Common Council - Third Ward



November 3, 2025

Mr. Lawrence T. Gilroy III
Dr. Marion Terenzio, President, SUNY Cobleskill
c/o Empire State Development
New York State Office Building
207 Genesee St.
Utica, NY 13501

Re: Letter of Support for NY Forward Funding

Dear Mr. Gilroy and Dr. Terenzio,

On behalf of the Uptown Theater for Creative Arts (UTCA), we are writing in strong support of the City of Utica's application to the New York Forward (NYF) grant program.

UTCA's mission is to restore and revitalize the historic Uptown Theatre as a community hub for creativity, performance, and connection. Since taking ownership of the long-vacant building in 2018, our nonprofit has brought new life to the South Utica neighborhood through year-round programming, local partnerships, and steady, visible progress on the theatre's restoration. What was once an abandoned property is now home to weekly improv classes and shows, live music, film screenings, and community events, like our annual Uptown Improv Festival, that draw thousands of visitors from all over the country each year.

Our work has already demonstrated the transformative potential of the Uptown District. Businesses have opened their doors nearby, foot traffic has increased, and residents are once again seeing this corridor as a place of pride and possibility. Visiting performers and artists consistently tell us they fall in love with Utica's warmth, character, and sense of community — proof that creative energy here resonates far beyond our own neighborhood. With support from the New York Forward program, this momentum can continue, expanding on what UTCA and our neighbors have already started by improving streetscapes, storefronts, and infrastructure throughout the district.

The Uptown District embodies the qualities the NYF program was designed to uplift: it's walkable, historic, neighborhood-serving, and full of untapped potential. Continued investment here will not only enhance South Utica's livability but strengthen Utica's overall economic and cultural fabric.

We wholeheartedly support the City's efforts to include the Uptown District in this transformational opportunity and stand ready to collaborate in realizing its vision for a thriving, creative, and inclusive community center for all.

Sincerely,

Devin and Briana Mahoney
Co-Founders, Uptown Theater for Creative Arts
South Utica Residents